

Message Text

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64

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O 042310Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA NIACT IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 0000

COUNSUL ASMARA NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OTTOWA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1278

EXDIS

E.9. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINDS, CASC, ET

SUBJ: TENNECO SEVEN

REF KHARTOUM 1277

FOR FREEMAN FROM BURGHER

1. ZEIN ARRIVED 2030 HOURS FOR MEETING WHICH LASTED TELL 2200. DETAILED DISCUSSION COVERED ALL DEMANDS AS WELL AS ZEIN'S VOLUNTEERING HIS VERSION HISTORY ELF MOVEMENT AND SOME OBSERVATIONS PRESENT STATUS WHICH PERTINENT TO ATTEMPT FREE CAPTIVES.

2. ZEIN INFORMED BURGHER AND GRAHAM THAT HE HAD CONTACTED HIS SUPERIORS (PRESUMABLY BY RADIO) AND THAT THEY DID NOT GIVE HIM ANY ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY TO REFUSE MONEY DEMAND BELOW ONE AND ONE HALF MILLION DOLLARS. ZEIN HAD ALSO BEEN INSTRUCTED TO RETURN TO BASE TO PERSONALLY BRIEF THE ELF COMMAND COUNCIL.

3. BURGHER THEN ASKED ZEIN TO PROVE HIS GROUPS GOOD FAITH AND CONTROL BY RELEASING AT ONCE ONE OR MORE OF THE HOSTAGES. ZEIN AGREED TO PROPOSE THIS TO THE ELF COMMAND COUNCIL. HE INDICATED THAT HE APPRECIATED THE NEED OF A GESTURE TO SHOW GOOD FAITH.

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4. ZEIN STATED HE WAS RETURNING TO THE BASE EARLY WEDNESDAY 5 JUNE

AND WOULD CONTACT US AGAIN BY 1100 HOURS FRIDAY 7 JUNE. AT THIS TIME HE WOULD CONVEY THE ELF DECISION ON THE RELEASE OF SOME OF THE CAPTIVES AND ON THE FOUR MAIN DEMANDS AND THE MECHANICS OF IMPLEMENTING THESE.

5. WE TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO GET ZEIN TO CONTACT US SOONER BUT HE INSISTED THAT DUE TO THE HAZARDS AND TRAVEL TIME THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE.

6. ZEIN STATED THAT RELEASE OF ELF PRISONERS HELD BY IEG WAS A VITAL POINT AND WE THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT ALL EFFORT BE EXPENDED TO SECURE IEG COOPERATION ON THIS ISSUE. ZEIN STATED THAT THE LIST OF NAMES OF ELF POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE READY AND WILL BE PRESENTED AT THE TIME OTHER POINTS ARE AGREED ON.

7. GIVEN ZEIN'S FLAT STATEMENT THAT HE DID NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO REDUCE THE MONEY DEMAND, BURGHER DID NOT INCREASE THE PREVIOUS OFFER.

8. GIVEN THE ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH CHANGED THE SITUATION WE FELT WE COULD NOT PUT FREEMAN'S JUNE 5, 1974 NOON DEADLINE FOR AGREEMENT ON ZEIN. REQUEST WE HANG ON HERE TILL FRIDAY AND IF NO AGREEMENT ON RELEASE OF ONE OR MORE HOSTAGES REACHED THEN BURGHER AND GRAHAM WILL BREAK OFF IMMEDIATELY AND HEAD FOR THE HOUSE.

9. OF INTEREST WAS ZEIN'S INFORMATION THAT IBRAHIM AL NUR, LEADER OF THE BAND THAT CAPTURED OUR MEN IS NO LONGER PERSONALLY IN CHARGE OF THEM SINCE THE MEN HAVE BEEN MOVED TO WEST ERITREA. ZEIN STATED THAT OUR MEN ARE NOW CLOSELY CONTROLLED BY THE ELF COMMAND COUNCIL.

10. ZEIN WOULD NEITHER CONFIRM OR DENY THAT ALL SEVEN CAPTIVES ARE TOGETHER. WE BELIEVE THAT ZEIN JUST DOES NOT KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THIS AT PRESENT. ZEIN STATED THAT AL NUR WAS STILL IN THE GHINDAR AREA WHERE HE IS IN CHARGE OF MILITARY TRAINING. ZEIN REVEALED THAT 500 RECRUITS CAME IN IN THE LAST MONTH.

11. ZEIN ALSO STATED THAT PLF LEADER SABRI, WHO IS IN TRIPOLI LIBYA, HAS LOST MOST OF HIS INFLUENCE AND HAS ONLY SCATTERED AND CONFIDENTIAL

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POORLY ORGANIZED BANDS IN ERITREA. BURGHER AND GRAHAM. BREWER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KIDNAPPING, PRISONER RELEASE, MEETINGS, NEGOTIATIONS, EXTORTION, HOSTAGES, POLITICAL PRISONERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974KHARTO01278
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740141-1076
From: KHARTOUM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740677/aaaacowd.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: KHARTOUM 1277
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TENNECO SEVEN
TAGS: PINS, CASC, ET, ELF, TENNECO SEVEN, (ZEIN), (BURGHER), (GRAHAM)
To: ATHENS
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005